

PROCLAMATION

The worldwide pandemic has put a spotlight on the mental health crisis that many are grappling with firsthand – and the heavy toll borne by the youngest among us, especially in underserved and marginalized communities. It's critical that our state, schools, communities and other partners across the board work together to strengthen our children's well-being and resilience, both during these unprecedented times and over the long term.

Across the country, the stress and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic intensified an already existing crisis, particularly for children and youth of color, low-income communities, LGBTQ+ youth, and other vulnerable groups. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that nearly 45 percent of teens reported feelings of sadness and hopelessness, and almost 20 percent of teens reported having seriously considered attempting suicide. Our youngest children also face challenges, with an estimated 8 to 10 percent of children under age 5 experiencing clinically significant and impairing mental health problems.

We must take urgent action to address this crisis. In partnership with the Legislature, my Administration has made bold investments to transform our youth mental health infrastructure statewide, creating a more equitable, prevention-focused system that will support all Californians aged 25 and younger and routinely screen them for emerging and existing behavioral health needs. We've also advanced funding and legislation to expand mental and behavioral health supports in our schools, helping students rebound from the impacts of the pandemic and providing long-term benefits for generations to come.

It will take all of us working together across health, education, business, government and communities to help our kids grow up healthier and stronger, and build a brighter future for our state. Observed during the first week of May – Mental Health Awareness Month, – Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a call to action for each of us to do our part in supporting the mental, social and emotional well-being of our children and youth. Whether helping kids stay connected with family and friends, teaching them mindful breathing practices, or spending time outdoors in nature, there are many ways to help. I encourage Californians to learn about information, supports and services that promote children's mental health at <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/childrens-mental-health-resources/>

NOW THEREFORE I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim May 1-7, 2022, as "Children's Mental Health Awareness Week."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 2nd day of May 2022.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.
Secretary of State